

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. By this Amendment, claims 4-6 are added. No new matter is added.

In numbered paragraph 1, independent claim 1 is rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication U.S. 2002/0010863 A1 (Mankefors). In numbered paragraph 2, dependent claims 2 and 3 are rejected as being unpatentable over the Mankefors publication, in view of U.S. Patent 6,681,304 (Vogt et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicant has disclosed a method for installing a mailbox file associated with a disk storage medium. For example, Applicants' claim 1 method includes obtaining a disk drive access key from an access key server, the access key being generated by the access key server as a function of an identifying characteristic of the disk drive; creating a mailbox file in the first range of addressable locations using the access key obtained from the access key server; and notifying the disk drive of a location of the mailbox file in the first range of addressable locations (see, e.g., paragraphs [0005] and [0027]). The disk drive can perform a function characterized by contents of the mailbox file (see, e.g., paragraphs [0018]).

Newly proposed claim 4 is directed to a method for accessing a mailbox file associated with a first range of disk drive host interface addressable locations. The method includes steps of recognizing a command from a host operating system in reference to the mailbox file associated with the first range of disk drive host interface addressable locations; and responding to the command by performing

within the disk controller an executable function characterized by the contents of the mailbox file (see, e.g., paragraphs [0032]-[0034]).

The Mankefors publication discloses a method for preventing unauthorized reproduction of software (see, e.g., Abstract and paragraph [0050] of the Mankefors publication). Fib. 5 of the Mankefors publication discloses a system 50 comprising a computer 51, a server 52, a database 53 and a key server 54. A customer download of software is authorization protected using the combination of a non-recurrent code key with hardware (identity) control (paragraph [0036]). Accordingly, installed software becomes tied to the hardware at installation time (paragraph [0038]). The Examiner asserts in the first two paragraphs on page 3 of the Office Action that this portion of the Mankefors publication (i.e., paragraph [0038]) discloses Applicant's claimed feature of creating of a mailbox file, and Applicant's claimed feature of notifying the disk drive of a location of the mailbox file.

The Mankefors publication does disclose that control information (flags) are saved in a special location (e.g., paragraph [0038]), such as in a separate file or in an existing Operating System file. The Mankefors publication states that "flags are saved in a file which can be a part of the program itself or placed at another location on the hard disk or a storage arrangement, which is 'difficult' to find" (paragraph [0039]). The Mankefors publication teaches that this special location needs to be searched and found, because the hard drive does not receive a notification as to where this special location might be. Therefore, the Mankefors publication does not teach or suggest notifying a disk drive of a location of a mailbox file in a first range of addressable locations, wherein the disk drive can perform a function characterized by contents of the mailbox file as recited in claim 1. Claim 1 is therefore allowable.

Further, the "Background" portion of the Mankefors publication, as described in paragraph [0002] through [0018] appears to suggest that Mankefors is concerned with a disk controller which only functions at the direction of a host controller. As such, this document teaches away from Applicant's claimed "mailbox file" wherein the disk drive can perform "a function characterized by contents of the mailbox file" (Applicant's claim 1). Applicant has disclosed, e.g., "It would be desirable to allow the hard disk drive to provide additional features and functionality within the hard disk drive without the hard drive requiring prior knowledge of, and without requiring modification to, the host computer operating system or its associated driver" (paragraph [0004]). The Mankefors publication discloses "control data is generated and inserted into a portion of an operating system instruction" (abstract). Accordingly, the Mankefors publication does not teach or suggest Applicant's use of a mailbox file as recited in claim 1. For reasons similar to those noted with respect to claim 1, Applicant's claim 4 is also allowable. For example, the Mankefors publication does not teach or suggest responding to a command by performing within the disk controller an executable function characterized by the contents of the mailbox file as recited in claim 4.

The Vogt et al. patent does not cure the noted deficiencies of the Mankefors publication. The Vogt et al. patent was cited for its disclosure of a hidden storage (col. 3, lines 33-42). However, the Vogt et al. patent, considered alone or in combination with the Mankefors publication, does not teach or suggest notifying a disk drive of a location of the mailbox file in the first range of addressable locations, wherein the disk drive can perform a function characterized by contents of the mailbox file as recited in claim 1. The Vogt et al. patent, considered alone or in

combination with the Mankefors publication, also does not teach or suggest responding to a command by performing within the disk controller an executable function characterized by the contents of the mailbox file as recited in claim 4.

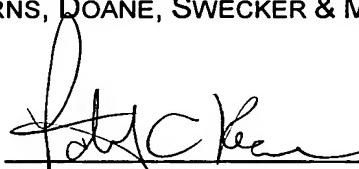
For the foregoing reasons, Applicant's claims 1 and 4 are allowable. The remaining claims depend from independent claims 1 and 4, and recite additional advantageous features which further distinguish over the documents relied upon by the Examiner. As such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

All objections and rejections raised in the Office Action having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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